



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

To The Point

VASNHS Newsletter

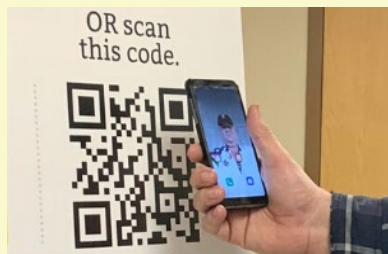
Summer 2022

IN THIS ISSUE



*Veterans Affairs
Life Insurance in 2023*

• 2 •



*Smartphone
Check-in-process*

• 4 •

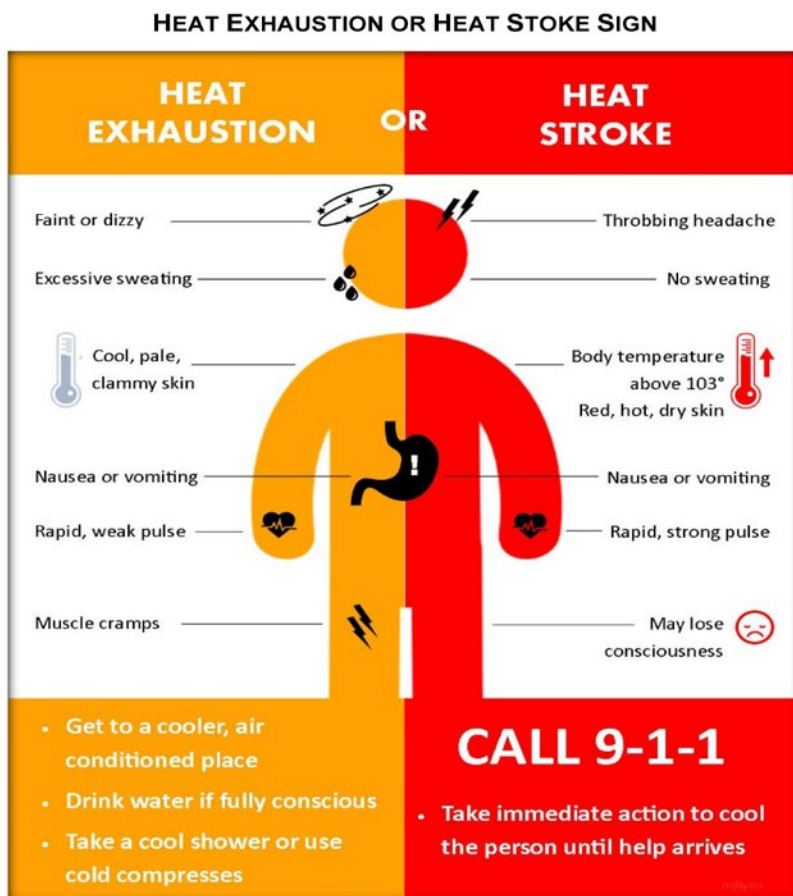


*VASNHS Welcomes
VA Police K-9 Team*

• 6 •

Staying SAFE in the Summer

Knowing the difference: Heat Exhaustion vs. Heat Stroke



It is important that during summer months, individuals should stay well hydrated and drink a lot of water. Those working outdoors should stay in the shade or within an air-conditioned building or vehicle as much as possible. Know the signs and symptoms of Heat Exhaustion or Heat Stroke.

If you have heat stroke, you need to get medical help right away. Older people living in homes or apartments without air conditioning or fans are most at risk. People who become dehydrated or those with chronic diseases or alcoholism are also most at risk.

Signs of heat stroke are:

- Fainting (possibly the first sign) or becoming unconscious
- A change in behavior—confusion, agitation, staggering, being grouchy, or acting strangely
- Body temperature over 104°F (40°C)
- Dry, flushed skin and a strong, rapid pulse or a slow, weak pulse
- Not sweating even if it is hot"

For More Information:

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/hot-weather-safety-older-adults>

VA Life Insurance Program

Coming January 2023 for Veterans with service connection

- In January 2023, VA will launch a new life insurance program called Veterans Affairs Life Insurance (VALife), which provides guaranteed acceptance whole life insurance coverage to Veterans, age 80 and under, with any level of service-connected disability. Some Veterans, age 81 and older, may also be eligible.
- Guaranteed acceptance is a whole life policy that does not require a medical exam or ask health questions. It also does not have a limited two-year window to sign up. Whole life insurance provides coverage for the entire life of the individual policyholder, provided that premiums are always paid. Premium rates are locked in for the life of the policy, and unlike term policies, will not increase as the policyholder ages.
- Created by Public Law 116-315, the new program meets the needs of service-connected Veterans who may not have previously qualified for life insurance with VA. VALife offers guaranteed acceptance whole life insurance coverage that lasts for an individual's entire life and provides the following benefits:
 - All service-connected Veterans, age 80 and under, with 0-100% VA disability ratings are eligible.
 - Fully automated online enrollment with instant approvals.
 - Coverage comes in increments of \$10,000, up to a maximum of \$40,000, and premiums are competitive – or better – than what's available in the private sector.
 - There is a two-year waiting period for full face value coverage to take effect.
 - No medical requirements for enrollment.
 - Cash value that builds over the life of the policy after the first two years of enrollment.
 - Rates are best the earlier you sign up. Once locked in, premiums will never increase.



Follow the links to the full article and resources:

<https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/103790/valife-insurance-program-coming-january-2023-veterans-with-service-connection/>
<https://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/valife.asp>

New easier-to-remember #988 Number for Veterans Crisis Line

National Roll Out Date: July 16, 2022



What is 988?

The Veterans Crisis Line's new, easy-to-remember number—Dial 988 then Press 1—will help Veterans and their loved ones reach crisis support quickly and efficiently.

Signed into law in 2020, the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act authorized 988 as the new three-digit number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

All telephone service providers in the U.S. must activate the number no later than July 2022; however, many providers have chosen to implement the service sooner.

After activation, the 10-digit number will still be available for Veterans and their supporters to use.

For more information go to:

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/about/what-is-988/>

VA: Health and Benefits

Mobile App



Try the initial version of the official VA: Health and Benefits app from the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to manage existing VA claims and appointments and message with your VA health care providers.

You can also access common VA letters and update your VA.gov profile information.

For More Information go to:

<https://mobile.va.gov/login-information>

Taking Care of Your Mental Health

July 2022 - Self-Care with Power of the Mind

We often think of our bodies and minds as separate, but common statements such as, “gut feeling,” “stress headache,” or “butterflies in my stomach” acknowledge the connection. It is helpful to notice the connection between your body and mind so you can use each to support the other. By calming your mind, you can calm your body and allow it to function better. You can notice this by taking calming breaths to decrease feelings of stress or by doing a guided meditation to decrease your heart rate. Your Whole Health includes all of you – working together with mindful awareness to guide you to an optimal state.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is simple. Not easy, but simple! Jon Kabat-Zinn calls it, “living your life as if it really matters.” What do we do when something really matters to us? We pay attention to it. While mindfulness can be practiced in many ways, the goal is to live our day-to-day lives while paying attention and being present. If you are washing the dishes, keep your mind on washing the dishes, if you are talking to someone, stay there. It’s easy to time travel to a conversation this morning or to an activity tonight and to walk your body around the world without your mind. Like driving and texting, it is unlikely to go well.



Be kind to yourself. When you notice that your mind is not with your body, gently bring it back. Your task in a moment may be processing the past or planning for the future. If your task is washing dishes, notice the water, the soap, the towel. Allow yourself the restful experience of doing one thing at a time. You may be surprised at how much more manageable life is one moment at a time, taking things as they come.

Additional Power of the Mind Approaches

- **Biofeedback** – Using biofeedback you learn to change some ways that your body works, such as your breathing, heart rate and muscle tension, using signals from your own body as a guide.
- **Breathing Exercises** – You can use deep breathing exercises to become calm and to help treat conditions that stress may cause or make worse.
- **Meditation** – In meditation, you train your mind to focus on your breathing, a word, or an image. You do not pay attention to what is going on around you. This helps your mind and body relax.
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)** – With PMR, you relax all of the muscles in your body in order, one group at a time. You can do this by first tensing a muscle and then relaxing it. This helps teach you how muscles feel when they are tense. A second way, called [progressive relaxation](#), is to focus on relaxing the muscles without tensing them first.



Power of the Mind Practice Resources

Learning to calm your mind takes practice. What is most beneficial for one person may not be the preferred method for another. The [#LiveWholeHealth Blog Series](#) has a variety of short videos you can use to explore and practice power of the mind activities.

These videos include breathing exercises, tai chi demonstrations, progressive muscle relaxation techniques, Yin meditations as well as many others.

New Mobile Check-in for In-Person Appointments

Smartphone appointment check-in offers convenience and self-service

VA Mobile Check-in for Appointments

Now Available in select clinics!

- ▶ With VA mobile check-in, you can check-in for your VA appointments using your smartphone.
- ▶ If you see this poster in your waiting area, mobile check-in is available.



VA Mobile Check-in | *Fast. Easy. Convenient.*

Smartphone appointment check-in offers convenience and self-service at your fingertips for an in-person appointments at a VA facility.

You now have the option to prepare for your next in-person appointment, using pre-check-in and mobile check-in. Based on extensive feedback from Veterans and caregivers, these processes are designed to make patient check-in easier for all Veterans, especially those who use assistive technologies to access your benefits online.

- **Pre-check-in** enables you to review your demographic information (contact, next of kin, emergency contact) on a mobile device from anywhere up to seven days before an appointment.
- **Mobile check-in** allows you to skip the line at the check-in desk on the day of your appointment by having you check in for your appointment using your smartphone.

Don't have a smartphone or prefer to check-in with a staff member? No problem. You'll always have the option to check in at the facility in-person with a staff member.

Pre-check-in and mobile check-in are easy to use. To use pre-check-in, you'll access a link through a text message appointment reminder after confirming an appointment. If you've opted out of text appointment reminders, you can restart these reminders by texting "START" to 53079 or by replying "START" to any previous text message from VA.

To check in for an appointment with mobile check-in, once you arrive at your appointment clinic, follow these three steps:

1. Locate the poster titled, '**Have an appointment?** Check in with your phone' prominently displayed in all clinics offering mobile check-in.
2. Scan the QR code or text the phone number on the poster.
3. Wait until you get a text back and click on the link to start your check-in.

For your next in-person appointment at a VA facility, give these options a try, or ask our staff about how they work. VA's Office of Information and Technology worked with the Veterans Health Administration and Veterans directly to create the application.

For more information about pre-check-in or mobile check-in, visit How To Check In With Your Smartphone For Some VA Appointments | Veterans Affairs go to: <https://www.va.gov/resources/how-to-check-in-with-your-smartphone-for-some-va-appointments/>

New Easier Way to Sign in to My HealtheVet

Signing In to My HealtheVet Through the VA Sign-In Page

My HealtheVet multifactor authenticated accounts will change the way Veterans log in to My HealtheVet. The sign-in process for My HealtheVet will change. My HealtheVet users will now sign in through the unified VA sign-in page. This new process gives Veterans' accounts an extra layer of security to keep their VA health information safe, conforming with the federal executive order on cybersecurity.

The new process will require our Veteran patients to connect their account to a unique email address — meaning one email address can't be used to sign in to multiple accounts. **This new process will also introduce multifactor authentication**, which is not currently required but helps strengthen account security. And the new page also includes an added option for signing in, [Login.gov](https://login.gov).

You will need to use your email address to complete the sign in. Make sure you have an email account that you can access during the sign-in process. And please note that you can't use one email address to connect to more than one My HealtheVet account.



The new page has an option to set up multifactor authentication, which is not currently required but helps strengthen account security. And it also includes a new option for signing in, [Login.gov](https://login.gov). You can use [Login.gov](https://login.gov) or continue using the previous sign-in options — My HealtheVet, DS Logon, or ID.me.

We understand change can be difficult and we're here to help. You can learn more about what to expect and find helpful resources on the My HealtheVet website. If you get stuck, you can call the [My VA 4-1-1](tel:8006982411) information line 24/7 at 800-MyVA-411 (800-698-2411).

My HealtheVet Sign-In Changes

My HealtheVet users will sign in to their accounts through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs sign-in page: [My HealtheVet Sign-In Changes - My HealtheVet Product \(va.gov\)](https://www.va.gov/myhealthevet/sign-in)

VASNHS My HealtheVet Coordinator contact information:

North Las Vegas VAMC - [My HealtheVet Coordinator](mailto:MyHealtheVetCoordinator@va.gov) at: (702) 791-9000 ext. 15437

[My HealtheVet Communications Specialist](mailto:MyHealtheVetCommunicationsSpecialist@va.gov) at: (702) 791-9000 ext. 15233



Save The Date: VA Medical Center Blood Drive

When: **September 9, 2022**

Where: **VA Medical Center - Auditorium**

Time: **10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

Call for an appointment as there are limited slots
(702) 791-9000, ext. 19176

You can also go on-line www.donors.vitalant.org and search for available times, with Blood Drive Code: 3183862.

For More Information go to: www.lasvegas.va.gov



Schedule your appointment to GIVE BLOOD at www.donors.vitalant.org and search for available times with Blood Drive Code: 3183862 or contact Vitalant at 877-258-4825 for assistance.

Learn more at [vitalant.org](https://www.vitalant.org)
#powerofgiving



VA Medical Center, Auditorium
6900 North Pecos Road
North Las Vegas, NV 89086

Friday
September 9, 2022
10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

[vitalant.org](https://www.vitalant.org)

VA Police Adds New Services

VA Southern Nevada is happy to announce our new K-9 team.

Author: Cristina Tobon, VASNHS Chief of Police

Our K-9 team will be an invaluable asset to our VA Police Department. Our team will allow us to reduce time and increase efficiency when attempting to locate missing patients as well as serve as a deterrent to the introduction of narcotics into our VA facilities. This wonderful addition to our team provides a comforting and friendly presence and increases the feeling of safety for our staff, patients, and visitors. Our K-9 team will complete continuous training and annual recertification to ensure they are current with all requirements of the program. We are very excited to add our K-9 team as part of our facility security plan.

Officer Lincoln Sims - First K-9 Handler at VASNHS

I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Lincoln "Scott" Sims. I'm a USMC Veteran, and I've been with VA Southern Nevada as a Police Officer for 10 ½ years. When I started working for the VA, our Police Services was new with less than a dozen officers. Today, we have 43 credentialed individuals with varied backgrounds, different responsibilities and job titles; one of which is K-9.

The first time I experienced a loss of someone close was in the military, it was to a drug overdose. I have wondered if anyone had paid closer attention, maybe he would have received help and still be alive. Now that I'm a Police Officer, and have a family of my own, I strive to serve others, give back, and help those who might not be able to help themselves. These are some of the reasons I applied for the new K-9 Handler position.

As the new K-9 Sergeant, I have goals and expectations for the program as it starts up; transparency, pride, integrity, professionalism, dedication, and community policing, to name a few.

During the first days of the K-9 program, my four-legged partner and myself will undergo 240 hours of initial training, we will be trained on scent detection or finding illegal narcotics such as marijuana, cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, MDMA (ecstasy). We will also be trained on locating people who might not be able to care for themselves. Both of these duties will be trained on monthly and certified annually.

It's not just about making an arrest or confiscating illegal narcotics; it's about making a difference. I know when I have a bad day, I light up when my own dog greets me and acts like it's been 100 years since she's seen me. Many of our Veterans will feel the same way when seeing a K-9 making rounds with its handler.

I look forward to interacting with our Veterans, employees, and visitors. I know my four-legged partner and I will excel, accomplish great things, and make our VA a better place.



Beat The Heat

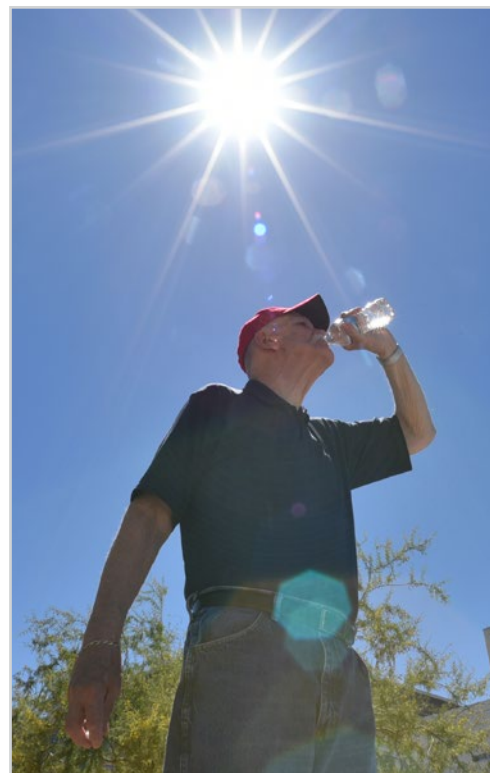
Everything You Need to Know About Heat-Related Illnesses

It's that time of the year again in Las Vegas where temperatures are rising, along with electric bills! Did you know that prolonged exposure to excessive heat can have direct and indirect impacts on health, such as dehydration and heat stroke? It is important to stay safe during outdoor physical activities, and other outside events where you are exposed to the sun and high temperatures. Heat-related illnesses are preventable as long as appropriate actions are taken to be prepared and staying informed about weather conditions.

Tips to Get You Through Vegas Summers:

- Stay well hydrated and drink plenty of water.
- When working outdoors or doing physical activity, try during cooler parts of the day, staying in the shade, or within an air-conditioned space as much as possible.
- If residence is without air conditioning, go to space with air conditioning, like a shopping mall or public library.
- Use community provided shelters and cooling stations for relief from the heat.
- Eat foods fruits and vegetables with high water content.
 - Includes watermelon, cantaloupe, cucumber, strawberries, grapes, cabbage, oranges, and celery
- Stay in shaded areas and take needed breaks to cool down.

Additionally, it is important to know the signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses. Knowing the signs and symptoms can lower risk of heat related medical emergencies. Older adults, infants and children, and individuals with chronic diseases are at a higher risk of heat-related illness.



Extreme Heat Safety Tips for Heat-related Illness

Extreme heat is when temperatures are much hotter or humid than normal. Heat-related health problems are preventable. However, some factors may put you at increased risk for illness, such as heat stroke or exhaustion.

WHO IS AT GREATEST RISK?
Infants, children, older adults (age 65 and older), and people who are overweight, ill, or on prescription medications.

WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS?
Common risk factors include:

• High levels of heat or humidity	• Alcohol use	• Poor circulation
• Fever	• Prescription drugs	• Sunburn
• Dehydration	• Heart disease	

QUICK TIPS:

• Wear lightweight, light-colored, and loose fitting clothing	• Pace yourself
• Don't leave children or pets in parked cars	• Wear sunscreen and reapply
• Keep hydrated	• Avoid hot and heavy meals
• Stay indoors	

FOR EMERGENCIES, CALL 911 OR GO IMMEDIATELY TO AN ER.

Heat Stroke Signs & Symptoms:

- Fainting or loss of unconscious.
- Change in behavior (confusion, altered mental status, agitation).
- Body temperature over 104°F (40°C).
- Dry, flushed skin and a strong, rapid pulse or a slow, weak pulse.
- Seizures.
- Not sweating, even if it is hot.

If you are experiencing any of the above signs, seek medical help right away.

For More information go to the CDC website:

https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat_guide.html

Upcoming Events July - Sept 2022 (Go to www.lasvegas.va.gov for current dates & times)

21 July - Veterans Administration Created 1930

August - National Immunization Awareness Month

4 August - U.S. Coast Guard Birthday

7 Aug - Purple Heart Day est. 1782

10 Aug - 3rd Annual Virtual Caregiver Summit - VASNHS

September - Suicide Prevention Month

5 Sept - Labor Day - Federal Holiday

15 Sept - Oct 15 : National Hispanic Heritage Month

16 Sept - National POW/MIA Recognition Day

18 Sept - U.S. Air Force Birthday

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North Las Vegas VA Medical Center
6900 North Pecos Road
North Las Vegas, NV 89086
Email: VHALASPAO@va.gov

Changing Behavior for Better Health

The VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System (VASNHS) *"To The Point Newsletter"* was designed to give Veterans, families, caregivers, and stakeholders information on the programs, services and the knowledge to better educate them of whole-health approaches to wellness.

Together, with a Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT), each Veteran works together with health care professionals to plan for whole-person care and life-long health and wellness. The Veteran is the focal point at the center of the health team so he or she can make informed decisions about their health care plan with the provider, nursing, nutrition, mental health, and services in the VA and local community.



VA VIDEO CONNECT: Getting Started

Understanding the VA Video Connect (VVC) Application

Through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' VA Video Connect (VVC) app, VA clinicians can connect with Veterans during real-time video appointments, helping to provide the right care in the right place at the right time by:

- Improving health care access, especially for those who live in rural areas or have health conditions that make it difficult to travel.
- Reducing appointment wait times, allowing Veterans to almost immediately connect to their VA care team.
- Making it easier to include Veterans' caregivers or support systems in their visits.



VVC is easy to set up. Veterans can simply use the camera on their smartphone, iPhone, computer, tablet, or iPad to get direct, real-time access to their VA care team.

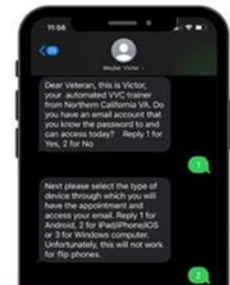
How can Veterans get started?

1. Talk with your VA provider to see if telehealth is a good fit for your care.
2. Learn more at: mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect.
3. For help setting up VVC on your device, call the Office of Connected Care Help Desk toll free at 866-651-3180.
4. Download the app. You can access VVC for iOS and Android devices on the VA Mobile webpage.
5. Test your device using the **VVC ChatBot. Text 'V' to 83293 or 323-621-3589.** Standard test messaging rates may apply.



Confirm that your mobile device works before your VA Video Connect appointment.

TEXT "V" to 323-621-3589



Test Your Device:

Once you have downloaded the app, scan this QR code to test your device for compatibility.



You can also test your device by sending a text to the VVC ChatBot.

Text 'V' to **83293** or **323-621-3589**. Standard text messaging rates may apply.

For the latest information in the VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System check out the following social media apps and WEB links:

VASNHS Website
Free Email Alerts



Scan Here to Sign-up!



www.facebook.com/LasVegasVA



www.myhealth.va.gov



www.instagram.com/VALasVegas



www.twitter.com/VALasVegas



The 9-Line Podcast

VASNHS YouTube



Scan Here for videos!